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Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions at IIT

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Organization:[Association of Records Managers and Administrators](#)

Source: [The Code of Professional Responsibility](#)

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Other Version(s) in our Codes of Ethics Online Collection:[1975](#)

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THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Preamble

Information and records management is that field within the information profession responsible for managing the creation, use, maintenance, and disposition of records generated in the normal functioning of all types of organizations.

ARMA International is a not-for-profit organization representing professionals in the field of information and records management. Its primary purpose is the advancement of records and information management through education and professional development.

Purposes of the Code

This code is intended to increase the awareness of ethical issues among information and records management practitioners and to guide them in reflection, decision making, and action in two broad areas of ethical concern: society and the profession.

I: The Social Principles

Because of their responsibilities to society, information and records managers:

1. Support the free flow and oppose censorship of publicly available information as a necessary condition for an informed and educated society.
2. Support the creation, maintenance, and use of accurate information and support the development of information management systems which place the highest priority on accuracy and integrity.
3. Condemn and resist the unethical or immoral use or concealment of information.
4. Affirm that the collection, maintenance, distribution, and use of information about individuals is a privilege in trust: the right to privacy of all individuals must be both promoted and upheld.
5. Support compliance with statues and regulations related to recorded information.

II. The Professional Principles

Because of their responsibilities to their employers or clients as well as to their profession, information and records managers:

1. Pursue appropriate educational requirements for professional practice, including a program of ongoing education and certification.
2. Accurately represent their education, competencies, certifications, and experience to superiors, clients, co-workers and colleagues in the profession.
3. Serve the client or employer at the highest level of professional competence.
4. Recognize illegal or unethical situations and inform the client or employer of possible adverse implications.
5. Avoid personal interest or improper gain at the expense of clients, employers, or co-workers.
6. Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information.
7. Enrich the profession by sharing knowledge and experience, encourage public discussion of the profession's values, services, and skills.

8. Are actively committed to recruiting individuals to the profession on the basis of competence and educational qualifications without discrimination.

THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY CLARIFICATIONS AND EXEMPLIFICATION'S

Preamble

Information and records management is that field within the information profession responsible for managing the creation, use, maintenance, and disposition of records generated in the normal functioning of all types of organizations.

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I: The Social Principles

Because of their responsibilities to society, information and records managers:

1. Support the free flow of information and oppose the censorship of publicly available information as a necessary condition for an informed and educated society.

Any government or public organization operating behind closed doors or restricting access to public information is a government or an organization which does not operate in accordance with democratic principles. Information and records management professionals understand that information and knowledge are the lifeblood of a free society, Therefore, they support the broadest possible access to public information

2. Support the creation, maintenance, and use of accurate information and support the development of information management systems which place the highest priority on accuracy and integrity.

The flawed creation, maintenance, or application of information can harm individuals or

organizations in many ways. Information and records managers recognize that information has a life cycle and can be Altered or misinterpreted at every stage of that cycle. Therefore, information and records managers undertake analyses and make recommendations regarding the appropriate creation, storage, dissemination, and use of information to insure its integrity.

3. Condemn and resist the unethical or immoral use or concealment of information.

Properly used, information is a powerful tool, one which can save lives, overthrow corrupt governments. or explore the universe. On the other hand, improper, illegal, unethical, or immoral use or concealment of information can wreck carom. cost lives, or destroy organizations. The information professional acts to prevent improper uses of information and refuses to affiliate with individuals or organizations that permit or promote such activity.

4. Affirm that the collection, maintenance, distribution, and use of information about individuals is a privilege in trust: the right to privacy of all individuals must be both promoted and upheld.

The right to privacy is a value respected by free people everywhere. Information and records managers strive to protect the individual's privacy while, often at the same time, having to reconcile that right with the right of access to information by others. Pie information and records manager must insure that effective policies, systems, and technologies am in place to protect information about individuals front unauthorized disclosure.

5. Support compliance with statues and regulations related to recorded information.

An Information management program must act first in accord with the law. Otherwise, there is no proper foundation for decisions made about the creation, use storage, or disposition of recorded information. Information and records managers must, therefore, have current knowledge of all statues and regulatory requirements having any bearing on recorded information under their jurisdiction. This knowledge is the starting point upon which the information and records manager's ethical foundations are built

II: The Professional Principles

Because of their responsibilities to their employers or clients as well as to their profession, information and records managers:

I Pursue appropriate educational requirements for professional practice, including a program of ongoing education and certification.

Appropriate formal and continuing education is critical to enlarging one's knowledge and maintaining one's competence in any field. Because information and records management

continues to be transformed legally and technologically, all information and records managers have a responsibility to attain a level of education necessary to maintain and improve their positions within their organization and the profession. Education in information and records management must continue throughout an individual's career, whether through degree programs, formal academic coursework, certification, workshops, seminars, and/or conferences sponsored by associations within the information management discipline.

2. Represent accurately their education, competencies, certifications, and experience to superiors, clients, co-workers and colleagues in the profession.

Misrepresentation of one's credentials is usually grounds for dismissal. Exaggeration of one's accomplishments or abilities is equally odious, is unethical, and is not to be tolerated.

3. Service the client or employer at the highest level of professional competence.

Using effective information and records management principles and practices, the professional provides service at the highest level of competence. One factor differentiating a professional from other employees of an organization is that a professional is able to separate professional responsibility and judgment from personal feelings and loyalty. This serves the employees or clients best long-term interests. Anything less demeans the practitioner and, by extension, the profession.

4. Recognize illegal or unethical situations and inform the client or employer of possible adverse implications.

The knowledge and values of information professionals uniquely qualify them to recognize the ingredients of ethically complex issues related to information and records management. The information and records manager pursues a reflective morality, not one limited by custom, tradition, or the moral terrain of a specific work environment. The professional has a responsibility to inform the employer or client that a given decision, action, policy, or procedure may have negative implications- The information and records manager may decide to disassociate from a client or employer who continues to pursue such a course.

5. Avoid personal interest or improper gain at the expense of clients, employers, colleagues, or co-workers.

Improper or illegal use of information for personal gain can take many forms. Information and records managers routinely access information during the course of their work. The information and records manager must be careful never to use or to disclose such information in a manner which will knowingly bring, or have the appearance of bringing, gain at the expense of one's employer, client, colleagues or co-workers. Also, conflicts of interest may arise which influence

the decision making process. In such cases, the information and records manager must be aware of such conflicts when recommending appropriate solutions to information and records management problems.

6. Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information

Every organization has privileged information This may include information classified for national defense purposes or information restricted for proprietary or privacy reasons. The information and records manager has the expertise and experience to evaluate, recommend, and oversee systems, procedures, and equipment which maintain the integrity of this information-regardless of media-against unauthorized access.

7. Enrich the profession by sharing knowledge and experience, encourage public discussion of the profession's values, services, and skills.

The degree of professional status of any field is directly related to society's knowledge and appreciation of that field's work. Along with published research, the exchange of ideas and knowledge enriches the profession. Not every individual has the ability to stand before a crowd and speak effectively on information and records management. Every individual does, however, have the ability to communicate experiences, lessons learned, knowledge, and values. Practitioners should take whatever public education opportunities present themselves to portray the achievements and benefits of information and records management in an accurate, engaging, and informative manner.

8. Commit to actively recruit individuals to the profession on the basis of competence and educational qualifications without discrimination.

In some organizations, nepotism or patronage may affect hiring decisions; in others, discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, physical limitation, national origin or cultural heritage, appearance, sexual orientation, or religion may take place. Information and records managers, however, should distance themselves from such practices and ad to hire and promote individuals solely on the bases of education, competence, and performance

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